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predominantly social character, its various stages towards an ever more pronounced radicalism, and the nature and extent of provincial participation are clearly shown.

A third of the volume is devoted to a description of the conditions prevailing under the Old Régime and the reform movements preceding 1789. It is a relief to find so full and adequate a treatment of matter absolutely indispensable to a correct understanding of the Revolution and yet which is generally condensed in books of this character within the curt limits of a single chapter or two. Professor Mathews traces the development of the revolutionary spirit during the reign of Louis XV., showing how manifold it was in its manifestations and how widespread before ever it was touched by philosophy and pointing out the lamentable characteristic that among the worst of the people it was a "mutinous and brutal" spirit, among the best a "morally selfish, or at best morally neutral" one.

Two hundred pages are devoted to the period between 1789 and 1795. The story is told graphically but with moderation. The philosophy of events is shown, as well as their course, for one of the merits of the book is this excellence of its interpretations. The positions of the leading personages and parties in the Revolutionary history are made intelligible. Particularly successful is the treatment of the Girondists and Jacobins. Of the Reign of Terror the author says that it is a fundamental mistake to consider it "a carnival of brute passion, or the outcome of anarchic forces become ascendant. This was true of certain days and of the work of certain agents of the Convention . . . but utterly false in the case of the government by committees between June, 1793, and July, 1794. The Terrorists were seekers after order, not after anarchy, and while it lasted the Terror was a genuine experiment in politics—crude, hideous, and never to be confounded with the work of the generous idealists of the Constituent Assembly; but in a politically ignorant and morally weak nation like France, possessing not a single man of first-rate ability among its legislators, probably inevitable. . . . But more than all it was implicit in the absolutism and the morals of the Old Régime" (p. 227).

Professor Mathews wisely gives little space to military events, merely indicating their bearing upon the Revolution. He closes his narrative with the installation of the Directory in 1795.

CHARLES D. HAZEN.

Jean-Paul Marat, The People's Friend. By ERNEST BELFORT BAX.
(Boston: Small, Maynard and Co. 1901. Pp. ix, 353.)

AN unpartisan and critical biography of Marat has long been desired. No one of the important Revolutionists has fared worse at the hands of posterity. His was too vehement a nature to have aroused other than vehement passions and consequently he has passed into historical literature as the *enfant perdu* of the Revolution. Modern historical investigation imperatively bids us alter our views. A biography that should

present the militant Jacobin in the new light, subjecting his career to a thorough and rigid examination, carefully substantiating every position taken in so stormy a narrative would be of great service. We do not need a defense, an apology, or an arraignment, but an impersonal study.

This Mr. Bax has not given us. Instead he has ranged himself with that great company of biographers who consider it their task to defend their heroes against all comers. Furthermore he has interjected his own political and economic views so freely into his narrative as to give it a polemical character, thereby lessening its value as pure biography. The temper in which the book is conceived is shown by this paragraph :

“The verdict of the ‘world’ on a public character, as well as on moral worth in general and its opposite, like the public opinion of the ‘world’ on other matters, represents only too often the verdict or the opinion of class-prejudice and ignorance. It is, in fact, a fairly safe plan to ascertain for oneself ‘what most people think’ on such questions, and then assume the opposite to be true. The result is a good working hypothesis, which remains, of course, to be possibly modified or even abandoned by subsequent investigation, but which is generally the nearest approach to truth we can make in the absence of the requisite knowledge for forming an unbiased judgment. Acting on this principle, the very extravagance of abuse with which Marat had been assailed suggested to me the probability than an exceptionally noble and disinterested character lay behind it. Modern research on the subject of the French Revolution has certainly more than justified this assumption” (pp. v and vi).

This is not auspicious, nor does our sense of the trustworthiness of this biography increase when we read the characterizations of prominent Revolutionary figures. Bailly, according to Mr. Bax, “from sheer timidity and want of backbone, allowed himself to be dragged at the tail of all the intrigues and rascalities of Lafayette and his following, and we regret, but cannot wonder, that he ultimately found his way to the guillotine.” Pétion is a “lady’s man,” Barbaroux, a “young dandy,” Madame Roland “that odious but classical example of the female prig.” The touchstone of Mr. Bax’s impartiality must lie in his treatment of the Girondists, Marat’s bitterest enemies. One does not need to be an admirer of that party to find this treatment inadequate, unjust and contemptuous.

In a work professedly aiming at the rehabilitation of a much abused man we are justified in expecting elaborate, definite and, if possible, incontrovertible detail in the support of every main contention. Now one of the important sections of this book is devoted to Dr. Marat’s professional, scientific and literary labors before the Revolution and we are told of his eminence and his influence in the world of thought and speculation. If these were what they are stated to have been, there must be an abundance of contemporary evidence to the fact. Very little of this is adduced, however, and the main reliance is placed in Marat’s own statements, which are accepted in almost every instance at their face value—always a dangerous proceeding, but particularly so in the case of one so suspicious of others, so inflated with self-esteem, so exaggerated in statement as was the Friend of the People. Cases in point are Marat’s account, sixteen

years after the event, of the treatment he endured at the hands of Lord North (pp. 31-35); and his description of his scientific career and the malignant hostility of the *philosophes*. This defect, of not controlling Marat's own evidence by the testimony of others, is one that recurs frequently throughout the book.

Mr. Bax's treatment of Marat's policy of violence and intimidation is not very clear, and is apparently inconsistent in its various stages. On p. 140 he quotes Marat as saying that these tremendous demands for ten thousand, a hundred thousand, heads were merely a rhetorical device, an emphatic way of speaking—"I used them with a view to produce a strong impression on men's minds and to destroy all fatal security"; whereas, on p. 178, he again quotes Marat as indignantly denying to Robespierre that these "sanguinary demands" were merely spoken "in the air." On pp. 137 and 225, Mr. Bax seems to suggest that Marat's ill health may be held responsible to some extent for the truculency of his language, a reasonable explanation that should have been more emphasized. But at other times he seems to defend this policy as justifiable, taking occasion to animadvert severely upon Thiers, certainly an irrelevant figure in a life of Marat (pp. 139-142; 209-215; 250).

Mr. Bax quotes Lombroso as saying that the skull of Charlotte Corday exhibits "all the characteristics of the prostitute criminal type." He does not quote another remark of Lombroso to the effect that Marat was of "*le type criminel complet*." The one remark would seem to be about as important as the other.

CHARLES D. HAZEN.

Mirabeau. Von Professor Dr. B. ERDMANNSDÖRFFER. Mit 4 Kunstbeilagen, 1 Faksimile und 93 Abbildungen. [Monographien zur Weltgeschichte, nummer XIII.] (Leipzig: Velhagen und Klasing. 1900. Pp. 128.)

THIS work was Erdmannsdörffer's last contribution to historical literature. It is one of a series of monographs written for the general reader and might serve as a model for that kind of a book. The general reader objects to footnotes; he cares only for the results, but they must be reliable and presented in an attractive form. A satisfactory book of that kind cannot be produced by a novice; it can be written only by a man of experience and training, with a special knowledge of the subject treated. That many of the ablest of modern historians have not disdained to write for a popular audience, is one of the hopeful things about modern historical literature.

Erdmannsdörffer's book impresses me as being, in some respects, the best short life of Mirabeau that has yet been written. It is naturally less brilliant, from a literary point of view, than the "*Vie de Mirabeau*" by Mézières, but it appears to me more scholarly; it is a better presentation of Mirabeau and the French Revolution than Willert has given us.